

A Story of Three Widows (Ruth 1:8-18)

Proposition: Everyone of us can find our own lives in the account of these three widows.

- I. **A Hindering Widow** (Vs. 8-13)
 - A. She was Sought for Help (Vs. 6-7)
 - B. She was a Source of Hindrance (Vs. 8-13)
- II. **A Halting Widow** (Vs. 14)
 - A. She Relented to a Faulty Plea (Vs. 14b)
 - B. She Remained in a Forsaken Place (Vs. 14b)
- III. **A Hoping Widow** (Vs. 15-18)
 - A. The Hope of a New Life (Vs. 16a-d)
 - B. The Hope of a New Lord (Vs. 16e-f)
 - C. The Hope of a New Loyalty (Vs. 17)

A Story of Three Widows (Ruth 1:8-18)

We ended last week's message standing over the grave of three men: Elimelech, Malon and Chilion. In less than a ten year period three husbands had died. I can't imagine what it is like to lose a mate. The grief I am told does not vanish in a mere few weeks after the loss. But continues, and lingers with the surviving mate to a greater and smaller degree throughout the remaining years of their life. Can you picture this mother and two daughters in law standing over these freshly dug graves. What a heart rending story of the consequences of getting away from God! But out of this darkest of hours a very valuable lesson emerges. These three ladies portray three different types of people. One a treacherous Example one a tragic example and one a thrilling example. Every one of us can find our own lives in the account of these three widows. Notice first of all...

I. A Hinderer Widow - Her life in Moab was a disobedient walk. But in Vs 8 we hear discouraging words. She may be on her way to God's will, but she's still in Moab as far

that hinders the work of God. Ever met one of these;

A. She Was Sought for Help - Naomi knew the one true and living God. Orpah and Ruth had been raised in idolatry. They were lost. Vs 6-7 As grief stricken Naomi set off for Bethlehem, these two women of Moab were following. They were looking to her for help for guidance, for direction. They were going to do what ever she did. We as believers need to be reminded constantly that we are being watched by the unsaved. Like it or not, they watch our actions and reactions Paul said in 1 Cor 4:9 "For I

B. She was a Source of Hinderence - If we know anything about the role of a Christian, we know that we are to endeavor to turn people to God. To compel them to come into His will. Dan 12:3 we are to "turn many to righteousness" But Naomi insists that they turn from God's Will. Vs 8-9 she was gleefully thankful. But (10-13) it is almost hurtful. She refers to a marriage tradition, if ^{with children} son dies, brother must marry wife. Naomi was thinking only of material + physical ⁵ not spiritual. That is the characteristic that

II. A Hauling Widow - The saddest part of this account is not the back slidden Christian (Naomi) and her attempts to hinder but the one soul on which her attempt

1) 1 Corinthians 4:9 *For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.* The word spectacle indicates a stage.

2) ...that brought Naomi to Moab in the first place. Living for the flesh. And now it attempting to drive two desperately lost women away from God. Robert Ingersoll, the infidel notorious for his attacks on the Bible, had a godly aunt. He sent her a copy of one of his books against the Bible. In the flyleaf he wrote: "If all Christians had lived like Aunt Sarah perhaps this book would have never been written." There are many people going to hell because of people who are going to heaven. Many believers live a life that is repealing rather than appealing. They are a blight to the name of Christ rather than a light for the cause of Christ. Dick Sheppard said, "The greatest handicap the Church has is the unsatisfactory lives of professing Christians."

1) one who turns away from God and rejects Him as their Saviour.

2) ...white knuckles and clinched teeth walk out the church doors
lost and on their way to destruction.

3) ...not one person in hell was ever destined or designated to go
there. Every one could have been saved, but like Orpah, they
refused that salvation of God.

was successful. Orpah illustrates one who turns
A. She Relented to a faulty Pled (vs 14)

What a heart rending scene. Tears of sorrow, fairwell Kisses. Naomi's argument was persuasive. Wrong but persuasive. But despite this, Orpah made the decision herself. She was the one that made up her mind which way she would go. Here we see in illustration on that rejects the way of salvation. Even with tears and sorrow, they reject the way of God for the will of self. I've seen many a man and woman, with white neckties and

B. She Remained in a forsaken Place -

Orpah chose to stay in a cursed land. She chose to live in spiritual darkness. She went back to her false Gods and a life that she was familiar with. She could have gone to Judah in spite of Naomi but she chose Moab. This is the last we hear of Orpah. The Bible indicates she stayed in that cursed land and died cursed of God. What a tragedy! To see so great an opportunity squandered. Never

to be regained. May I remind you not one person
117. A Hoping Widow - Despite the hindering words of Naomi, Ruth, unlike Orpah, stays with Naomi. Stays pointed in the way to the will of God

says yes to the Lord Jesus.

A. The Hope of a New Life - Vs 16c-d -

She was leaving a cursed land for a blessed land. She was leaving a place of spiritual darkness for a place of spiritual light. A land and a life of idolatry for a land of the one true and living God. She had the hope of a brand new life. Paul said in 2 Cor 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature.
B. The Hope of a New Lord - Vs 16e-f. There can be no doubt that she was very different than any of her fellow countrymen, steeped in idolatry and the false Gods of Moab. She had known nothing else but paganism. But now she had a new Lord. Her life was now centered around him and his people. We were no different before God came into our lives we

C. The Hope of a New Loyalty Vs 17 -

What Ruth is saying is that this is for the rest of my life. She had no looking back, no plans to return. And really what was there to return to. Oh dear friend, with our new life and Lord we have a new loyalty. What do we have to go back to in this world. Nothing but hopelessness and emptiness.

IV. Closing. The question is which one of these ladies most closely portray you. Naomi the hindering widow, Orpah the halting widow, Ruth the Hoping Widow

- 1) ...2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* A man was speaking on a street corner and said, "Socialism will give you a new job. Socialism will give you a new house. Socialism will give you a new coat to wear. Can anyone tell me anything that is better than that?" An old man stepped forward and said, "Yes, I can! Salvation in Jesus Christ! Salvation will put a new man on the job; salvation will put a new man in the house and a new man in the coat."
- 2) ...lives we worshiped the gods of riches, recreation, and reputation. But with the free gift of salvation, we have a new Lord and master. We are drawn to the things that interest Him. We bow at the feet of our redeemer and not to the god's of this world.
- 3) ...hopelessness and emptiness. For the child of God there is nothing behind us, but everything before us!